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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 12

RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

Senegal (on behalf of the African group): draft resolution

1998/.. Recognition of slavery and the slave trade as a crime against humanity

The Commission on Human Rights,

Considering the provisions of the Slavery Convention of 1926 and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery of 1956,

Bearing in mind article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 8 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which state that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude,

Concerned by the gross violation of human rights and crimes committed against the African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora as a result of slavery and the slave trade, particularly the trans-Atlantic slave trade,

Taking into account the long years of exploitation of Africa through the trans-Atlantic slave trade for the benefit of international commerce, especially in Europe and America,

Conscious of the long-term socio-economic, cultural and political impact of the long years of slavery and the slave trade,

Noting that the slave trade, particularly the trans-Atlantic slave trade, spawned, directly or indirectly, the scourge of racism and reinforced and entrenched racial prejudices and other related intolerance which continue to haunt the international community today,

Recognizing that the trans-Atlantic slave trade was particularly horrendous and flagrant in its magnitude and effect on the African peoples,

Welcoming the fact that other peoples who were subjected to lesser or similar scourges and injustices have received apologies, compensation and reparations,

Mindful of the moral obligation to remember the injustices arising from slavery and the slave trade, especially the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as a gross violation of human rights,

Convinced that African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora deserve apologies for the injustices committed against them through centuries of slavery and the slave trade,

Convinced also that the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides an auspicious occasion for the international community to consider this matter,

1. Recognizes the fact that slavery and the slave trade constitute a gross and flagrant violation of human rights against the African peoples and a crime against humanity;

2. Decides to establish an expert group composed of 10 eminent scholars of African history and international jurists, to meet for a period of two weeks prior to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission to examine the extent of the injustices occasioned by, in particular, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and determine the degree of liability of those involved;

3. Requests the expert group to submit its report to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session;

4. Requests the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights to undertake the necessary consultations for the appointment of the expert group and to ensure that it is provided with all the necessary assistance and resources to discharge its mandate expeditiously;

5. Calls upon all States as well as relevant international organizations and bodies to provide maximum cooperation to the expert group in carrying out its duties;

6. Requests those States which, directly or indirectly, by commission or omission, participated, permitted, facilitated or tolerated slavery and the slave trade to start the process of healing the wounds by offering their apologies to the African peoples concerned;

7. Decides to remain seized of this matter at its fifty-fifth session under the same agenda item;

8. Recommends the following draft decision to the Economic and Social Council for adoption:

"The Economic and Social Council, taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/ ... of ... April 1998, decides to authorize the Commission to establish an expert group composed of 10 eminent scholars of African history and international jurists, to meet for a period of two weeks prior to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission to examine the extent of the injustices occasioned by, in particular, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and to determine the degree of liability of those involved, and to submit its report to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session."